

August 26, 2011 | By Leonard A. Leo & Don Argue, Ed.D.

For billions of people, religion is a powerful source of identity, meaning and purpose, and the freedom to practice one's religion or beliefs remains paramount. Unfortunately, this freedom is frequently violated, with governments perpetrating or tolerating abuses, from imprisonment to torture and mass murder.

Based on America's culture and heritage, international law and treaty, and critical security needs, authors [Leonard Leo](#) and [Dr. Don Argue](#) contend that these violations must not go unchallenged; international religious freedom must be protected and promoted.

In 1998, Congress passed the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) which created the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), on which the authors serve as Chairman and Vice Chair.

As the only commission of its kind in the world, USCIRF has a role to play. The authors describe its mission, summarize its work, and offer concluding words about what the future may hold for international religious freedom.

About the authors:

Leonard A. Leo is Chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). He serves as the Executive Vice President of the Federalist Society for Law & Public Policy Studies. He served as a U.S. delegate to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in 2005, has been an observer to the World Intellectual Property Organization, participated in two World Health Organization delegations in 2007, and is involved with the U.S. National Commission to UNESCO. He is the co-editor of Presidential Leadership: Rating the Best and Worst in the White House.

Don Argue, Ed.D. is Vice Chairman of USCIRF. Dr. Argue, was appointed Chancellor of Northwest University in Kirkland, Washington, in 2007, after serving as president of Northwest for nine years. Commissioner Argue previously served as president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). He also served as President of North Central University in Minneapolis, for 16 years, and was a member of the first official delegation of religious leaders from the United States to visit China. He has served as the pastor of churches in Missouri and California.

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USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission. USCIRF Commissioners are appointed by the President and the leadership of both political parties in the Senate and the House of Representatives. USCIRF's principal responsibilities are to review the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom internationally and to make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress.

To interview a USCIRF Commissioner, contact Tom Carter, Communications Director at tcarter@uscirf.gov

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